

REMARKS

[0003] Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all of the claims of the application. Claims 1-11 and 13-29 are presently pending. Claims amended herein are 1-5, 13, 21, 22, and 26-29. Claims withdrawn or cancelled herein are 12 and 30-33. No new claims are added herein.

Statement of Substance of Interview

[0004] The Examiner graciously talked with me—the undersigned representative for the Applicant—on September 4, 2008. Applicant greatly appreciates the Examiner's willingness to talk. Such willingness is invaluable to both of us in our common goal of an expedited prosecution of this patent application.

[0005] During the interview, I discussed how the claims differed from the cited references. Without conceding the propriety of the rejections and in the interest of expediting prosecution, I also proposed several possible clarifying amendments.

[0006] The Examiner was receptive to the proposals, specifically the clarification regarding "evaluating an association", as recited in amended claim 1. The Examiner noted that the proposed claim amendment appeared to be allowable over the cited references. The Examiner indicated, however, that he would need to do another search, and requested that the proposed amendments be presented in writing.

[0007] Applicant herein amends the claims in the manner discussed during the interview. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the pending claims are allowable over the cited art of record for at least the reasons discussed during the interview.

Formal Request for an Interview

[0008] If the Examiner's reply to this communication is anything other than allowance of all pending claims, then I formally request an interview with the Examiner. I encourage the Examiner to call me—the undersigned representative for the Applicant—so that we can talk about this matter so as to resolve any outstanding issues quickly and efficiently over the phone.

[0009] Please contact me to schedule a date and time for a telephone interview that is most convenient for both of us. While email works great for me, I welcome your call as well. My contact information may be found on the last page of this response.

Claim Amendments

[0010] Without conceding the propriety of the rejections herein and in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicant amends claims 1-5, 13, 21, 22, and 26-29 herein. Applicant amends claims to clarify claimed features. Such amendments are made to expedite prosecution and more quickly identify allowable subject matter. Such amendments are merely intended to clarify the claimed features, and should not be construed as further limiting the claimed invention in response to the cited references.

Substantive Matters

Claim Rejections under § 112 2nd ¶

[0011] Claims 26-29 and 30-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd ¶. In light of the amendments presented herein, Applicant submits that these rejections are moot. Accordingly, Applicant asks the Examiner to withdraw these rejections.

Claim Rejections under § 101

[0012] Claims 12, 21 and 26-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101. In light of the amendments presented herein, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims now comply with the patentability requirements of §101 and that the §101 rejections should be withdrawn.

[0013] If the Examiner maintains the rejection of these claims, then Applicant requests additional guidance as to what is necessary to overcome the rejection.

Claim Rejections under § 103

[0014] Claims 1-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103. In light of the amendments presented herein and the discussion held during the above-discussed Examiner interview, Applicant submits that these rejections are moot. Accordingly, Applicant asks the Examiner to withdraw these rejections.

Conclusion

[0015] All pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and prompt issuance of the application. If any issues remain that prevent issuance of this application, the **Examiner is urged to contact me before issuing a subsequent Action.** Please call or email me at your convenience.

Respectfully Submitted,

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